

Program Notice

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08/12/02

SAMPLING RIVER BARGES – NON-CONTINUOUS LOADING

1. PURPOSE

This notice transmits procedures for assuring river barge inspection certificates reflect the quality and condition of grain loaded into a barge when the barge is not loaded in a continuous manner.

2. BACKGROUND

River barges, at times, are not loaded in a continuous manner because grain is not always available during the loading process; environmental conditions may restrict loading times; or the loading company may not need to immediately complete the barge loading process. Online sampling methods collect grain samples as the barge is loaded. However, grain in partially loaded barges may deteriorate over time. If this occurs, the grain collected as part of the official sample may not reflect the condition of the grain in the barge when the barge is shipped.

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) solicited input from the National Grain and Feed Association and the North American Export Grain Association to address this issue. These associations were considered for input since their members are most active in barge transactions.

The grain industry has recommended that GIPSA provide a visual inspection of the grain in the barge to assure quality deterioration has not occurred if a partially loaded barge is inactive for more than 88 hours. This action will assure that the official sample is representative of the grain in the carrier.

3. PROCEDURE

Official inspection personnel must verify, by visual inspection of the grain loaded in the carrier, that the official sample obtained during loading is representative of the condition of the grain loaded to the carrier. This verification inspection is required when official samples are obtained for partially loaded barges and the loading process is inactive for more than 88 consecutive hours.

Loading and continuous sampling is permitted if the sample is representative of the lot loaded to the carrier. If inspection personnel determine the official sample is not representative of the grain loaded to the carrier, then a new sample is required to complete the inspection.

4. QUESTIONS

Direct any questions regarding this procedure to the Policies and Procedures Branch at (202) 720-0252.

/s/ Ray Hart

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